

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PRIVACY ACTS

**SUBJECT: COMMUNIST INFILTRATION-MOTION
PICTURE INDUSTRY(COMPIC) (EXCERPTS)**

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director

DATE: October 2, 1947

FROM : D. M. Ladd

SUBJECT: COMMUNIST INFILTRATION INTO
MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY

Mr. Tolson	_____
Mr. E. A. Tamm	_____
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Reference is made to my memorandum to you of July 8, 1947. Attached to the referenced memorandum was a summary based upon available information on Communist infiltration into the motion picture industry. You were advised in referenced memorandum that additional inquiry was being made by the Los Angeles and New York Offices in order to obtain a more complete and rounded picture of the subject matter. The information which has been obtained from these Offices has now been incorporated into a new summary on the captioned subject matter. This summary is attached hereto.

A digest of the Communist activities set out in the summary will preface the summary for your convenience. The summary is broken down under the following headings:

- I. History and Development of a Communist Party in Hollywood
- II. Communist Infiltration of Labor Groups
- III. Communist Infiltration of Intellectual Groups
- IV. Communist Infiltration in Motion Pictures
- V. Soviet Activities in Hollywood
- VI. Investigation of Communist Activities in the Motion Picture Industry by the Committee on Un-American Activities of the House of Representatives
- VII. Association of Motion Picture Producers, Incorporated

Attachment

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October 2, 1947

D I G E S T

COMMUNISM IN THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY

The Executive Committee of the Communist International in March of 1925 instructed the Communist Parties of the world to turn the motion picture into an arsenal of agitation and propaganda weapons of the Communist Party.

Willi Muenzenberg, a former member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, authored two articles printed in the American Communist newspaper, The Daily Worker, in 1925, which pointed to the significance of the motion picture as a propaganda medium of the Communist Party. Muenzenberg quoted one of the fathers of Communist teachings, V. I. Lenin, as follows:

"You must powerfully develop film production, taking especially the proletarian kino (motion picture theaters) to the city masses and still a much greater extent to the village. You must always consider that of all the arts, the motion picture is for us the most important."

Muenzenberg, in his articles, also made the following statements:

"We must develop the tremendous cultural possibilities of the motion picture in the revolutionary sense....One of the most pressing tasks confronting Communist Parties on the field of agitation and propaganda is the conquest of this supremely important propaganda weapon, until now the monopoly of the ruling class. We must wrest it from them and turn it against them."

"There must no longer be any country in which the Communist Party and its group do not make extensive use of the motion picture film."

The printing of these articles by the Daily Worker can be considered as a directive to the American Communists in that it was authored by an internationally famous Communist propagandist.

Communists in the United States following these instructions have employed the strategy and techniques outlined by the great Communist fathers, Marx and Lenin.

In order to understand the operational procedures of the Communists it is well to consider the aim of the Communist Party in the United States. According to a "Manual on Organization of the Communist Party," by J. Peters, which was published in 1935, this aim is to overthrow capitalism and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat..

William Z. Foster, present National Leader of the Communist Party in the United States in his book, "Toward Soviet America," stated:

"The leader of the revolution in all its stages is the Communist party....The establishment of an American Soviet Government will mark the birth of real democracy in the United States."

As an additional indication of the allegiance of the American Communists it should be noted that William Z. Foster, when testifying before the Fish Committee of the 71st Congress in 1930, stated:

"The workers of this country (United States) and the workers of every country have only one flag. That is the red flag. That is the flag of the proletarian democracy."

Indicative of the revolutionary character of the Communist Party is the following quotation taken from the "Manual on Organization of the Communist Party," by J. Peters, in which the author quotes from a pledge given by Earl Browder to two thousand individuals that were being initiated into the Communist Party in New York City in 1935:

"I pledge myself to rally the masses to defend the Soviet Union, the land of victorious Socialism. I pledge myself to remain at all times a vigilant and firm defender of the Leninist line of the Party, the only line that insures the triumph of Soviet power in the United States."

The deceptive tactics, including the use of trickery and subterfuge, by Communists, are also indicated in the teachings of Lenin. Lenin stated:

"It is necessary to be able to withstand all this, to agree to any and every sacrifice, and even—if need be—to resort to all sorts of devices, maneuvers, and illegal methods, to evasion and subterfuge, in order to penetrate into trade unions, to remain in them, and to carry on Communist work in them at all costs."

In order to fully understand the full import of the Communist propaganda which is disseminated by the Party and its sympathizers in written or spoken words, the deceptiveness of Aesopian language utilized by the Communists must be considered

Lenin, in referring to this brand of Communist doubletalk, stated:

"....that cursed Aesopian language...which...compelled all revolutionaries to have recourse, whenever they took up their pens to write a 'legal' work."

Lenin used Aesopian language for the purpose of avoiding censorship. Communists today are using it to mislead the public.

Information has been received that in 1935, the Communist Party, USA, issued instructions to the Hollywood Section of the Communist Party to intensify and concentrate their activities in Hollywood and the motion picture industry. This directive emphasized the fact that the Communists must try to capture the labor unions and pointed out that if this were done the unions could be of tremendous service in influencing the type of picture produced. The directive also contained a specific call to the Communists requesting them to concentrate on the so-called intellectual groups in Hollywood which are composed of directors, writers, artists, actors, actresses, and highly paid technicians.

The infiltration of the motion picture industry, commencing in 1935, was one of the important objectives of the Communist Party in the United States. The Communists recognized the motion picture as an excellent means of molding and influencing public opinion. The noted Communist theoretician, V. J. Jerome, was sent by the Communist Party, USA, to Hollywood on several occasions to carry out the orders of the Communist Party with regard to the motion picture industry. The general plans of the Communist Party included schemes to capture the labor unions, influence management, make friends among the company executives and to penetrate the so-called intellectual groups.

V. J. Jerome, in the late 1930's, was assisted in the labor field in Hollywood by Jeff Kibre, a Communist labor leader, who was active in the Communist crafts and unions in Hollywood.

John Howard Lawson, the Communist screen writer, and Edward Biberman, Communist Director, who in 1941 were reported as functionaries of the Communist Party in Hollywood, played an important role in the Communist plan of attack. Lawson, as a leader of the Screen Writers' Guild, was instrumental in getting many Communist writers such as Albert Maltz, Alvah Bessie, Dalton Trumbo, and Henry Blankfort, who were sent to him by the National Headquarters of the Party, into the motion picture industry. Hanns Eisler, brother of Gerhardt Eisler, indicated on one occasion that he intended to go to Hollywood through the efforts of John Howard Lawson.

The Communist Party in Hollywood, has undergone many structural changes since it was first organized. The last major change occurred in December, 1945, under the leadership of John Stapp, Hollywood Section Organizer for the Communist

Party. Stapp caused the formation of three sub-sections, namely the cultural, the industrial, and the community. The latter two have just recently merged into one group. In addition, there are five studio shop units or branches located at Universal International, RKO, MGM, Paramount, and Columbia Studios. Waldo Salt, the Communist screen writer, is the organizer of the cultural sub-section in Hollywood. A studio grip, Paul Perlin, is the organizer of the consolidated community and industrial sub-sections.

A very reliable source has indicated that there are six hundred Communists employed in the motion picture and radio industries, in Hollywood, California. Five hundred and twenty of these individuals have been identified as Communists in that they are now or were members of the Communist Party, USA, or were members of the Communist Political Association, USA. The occupational breakdown of these Communists whose occupation has been ascertained is as follows:

Actresses	45
Actors	47
Directors	15
Producers	8
Writers	127
Publicists	5
Musicians	42
Analysts	9
Technicians	12
Cameramen	3
Film Editors	1
Miscellaneous (cartoonists, laborers, office employees, artists, and so forth)	62

A noticeable change has been reported to be taking place in the tactical operations of the Communists in Hollywood. This change appears to be the result of the attitude now taken by the Government and the country as a whole, toward the Communist movement in the United States.

Former outspoken leaders of the Communist Party, as well as other Communist sympathizers, have drawn back into less important positions and have less to say openly in Communist affairs, while those who have not been so active or so well known have been forced to the front to carry on the program, not as Communists, but camouflaged as "liberals" and "progressives."

Following the Leninist teachings on tactics and strategy, the Communists in the motion picture industry are reported to be boring within the anti-Communist movement, their objective being to direct these anti-Communist movements to less harmful channels. The result is that Communists are actually attacking themselves or their movement.

According to a reliable source the Communists have actually lost ground in the trade union field because of the failure of the Conference of Studio Union. The Communists have, however, more than made up for this failure by having their sympathizers placed in high executive positions in the motion picture industry, such as directors and writers. This latter type of penetration is more insidious because of the reputations and influence gained by those elevated in this manner.

Among the labor element in Hollywood the principle force of the Communists has been the Conference of Studio Unions. This group is described as a bloc of Communist controlled unions under the leadership of Herbert K. Sorrell, who has been identified as a former member of the Communist Party. The purpose of the Conference of Studio Unions has been reported as two-fold; (1) that the Union desires to keep the general labor situation agitated in Hollywood in line with the Communist Party program of creating confusion and (2) to maintain intact the leadership of Herbert K. Sorrell.

The strikes which have developed between the Conference of Studio Unions and the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees have been for the most part purely jurisdictional disputes caused by the Communist bloc in the Conference of Studio Unions as a part of their disruptionist tactics to gain control of the labor element in Hollywood.

The Screen Writers' Guild is one of the first unions which was formed in the motion picture industry in the cultural field. It has been under the influence of Communists and Communist sympathizers since its inception. The purpose of the Screen Writers' Guild has been to obtain better conditions for its members and to propagate the Communist Party strategy in influencing public opinion. These Communists and their fellow travelers in the Screen Writers' Guild have furthered the Communist cause by the dissemination of their Communist ideology to unsuspecting writers who are also members of the Guild. The Communist writers and "Innocents" then inject into motion picture scripts Communist-veiled propaganda or eliminate anti-Communist statements or scenes from the original motion picture script.

The Screen Actors' Guild has been infiltrated by many Communists and Communist sympathizers. Forty-two individuals who have been identified as Communists are known to be members in good standing of the Screen Actors' Guild.

The Screen Cartoonists' Guild is another group which has been under the influence of Communists and Communist sympathizers. Known Communists and/or Communist sympathizers have held official positions in the Guild. Close cooperation has existed between the Communist Party in the Hollywood area and the Screen Cartoonists' Guild.

The Council of Hollywood Guilds and Unions is an organization allegedly formed to fight the so-called "Fascist" activities of the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals. Known Communists and Communist sympathizers, active in the motion picture industry, participated in the formation of this group and many of these individuals have continued in executive capacities in this organization.

In the cultural field the Hollywood Communists have been most successful in influencing organizations such as the Hollywood Writers Mobilization, the People's Educational Center, the Hollywood Independent Citizen's Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions, and the Actors' Laboratory.

The Communists and fellow travelers in the Hollywood Writers Mobilization played an important part in writing and producing documentary films for the Overseas Branch for the Office of War Information. In the Spring of 1945 the Hollywood Writers Mobilization Editorial Committee on Overseas films was composed of fourteen members. Seven of these have been identified as Communists.

The People's Educational Center in Hollywood is an outgrowth of the Hollywood Writers School, a Communist school in Los Angeles, and it was formed by known Communists and active Communist sympathizers. Since its inception this group has offered courses on political and cultural matters as well as instructional courses with regard to the motion picture industry. The majority of its instructors have been identified as Communists or active Communist sympathizers in that they have been prominent in known Communist Front organizational work in the motion picture industry. Such well-known Communists as motion picture Directors Herbert Biberman, Frank Tuttle and Edward Dmytryk have been connected with it in an executive or teaching capacity.

The Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions is an organization which was supported by the Communist Party and the Communist press during its existence. A national Communist functionary (Lionel Berman) has been given credit for participating in the formation of this group. In Hollywood the Communist penetration of this group was no exception for the Executive Council, at the time the Hollywood unit was established, had fifteen individuals as Council members, who have been described as Communists. Many more members of the Executive Council have been affiliated with other organizations known to have been infiltrated by the Communist element.

This organization in Hollywood has been described as having taken a part in, or supported, all local activities in the Hollywood area which were inspired or propagated by the Communist Party.

On February 11, 1947, the Hollywood Chapter of the Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions, went out of existence and its membership formed a new group known as the Progressive Citizens of America, which action was precipitated by similar action being taken by the National organization on December 28 and 29, 1946, in New York City. It is known that this same National Communist functionary, (Lionel Berman), who was active in the formation of the Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions, was active in laying the plans for the formation of the Progressive Citizens of America. The Progressive Citizens of America has established in Hollywood a Council of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions of the Progressive Citizens of America. This group recently sponsored a Conference on Thought Control which was actively participated in by many known Communists and Communist sympathizers.

The Communist Party has concentrated its efforts on the writers and directors of the motion picture industry for a considerable period of time in an effort to have Communist propaganda injected into motion pictures. The writer who creates the dialogue and action and the director who interprets the same are in a position to influence the political philosophy contained in any given picture. For this reason, the political views and background of the writer and the director are utilized to the fullest extent by the Communist Party in their effort to disseminate propaganda through the motion picture.

During World War II, these writers and directors, who acted under Communist guidance, were reported to have inserted excerpts into pictures in a most clever manner. The crowning achievement in this respect was the picture "Mission to Moscow." However, the open propaganda in this picture was so obvious that throughout the United States the picture was criticized by numerous newspapers. This action resulted in the Communists changing their tactics to a more subtle approach. The Communists and Communist sympathizers are now said to be content with the inserting of a line, sentence, or a situation into a picture which will carry the Communist Party line into an otherwise nonpolitical picture. It has been said that they have found this method to be more effective by reason of the fact that it does not appear to be purposeful but rather incidental. This subtle method of getting propaganda into the motion pictures has not been limited to the serious drama but has also included the musical comedies. The Communists have not only endeavored to inject Communist propaganda into pictures but have also prevented material which the Party might consider objectionable to its current program from appearing in pictures.

It is significant to point out that William Z. Foster, national leader of the Communist Party, USA, in a conversation on September 10, 1947, at Los Angeles with William Schneiderman and Ned Sparks, West Coast Communist Party leaders, commented concerning the motion picture "The Best Years of Our Lives" that it was the

real "stuff" and commented on the pictures "The Farmer's Daughter" and "Crossfire" by stating "They are standing them on their ears." He referred to all three of these pictures as very fine productions. These three pictures are discussed in Section IV of this memorandum.

Summarily, it may be said that the Communist Party, through its members and Communist sympathizers, has been most successful in its infiltration tactics among the labor and intellectual groups in Hollywood motion picture industry. Through the labor element they have utilized their disruptionist tactics causing strife and unrest. Through the intellectual groups they have attempted to disseminate Communist propaganda in a very subtle and disguising manner through the motion picture, or have prohibited filming or production of anti-Communist material.

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